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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	* CONFIRMATION NO.
10/049,602	02/14/2002	Kazuo Chikaraishi	XA-9620	9715

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MILES & STOCKBRIDGE PC
1751 PINNACLE DRIVE
SUITE 500
MCLEAN, VA 22102-3833

[REDACTED]
EXAMINER

VAN PELT, BRADLEY J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3682	

DATE MAILED: 04/22/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

PLS

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/049,602	CHIKARAISHI ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Bradley J Van Pelt	3682

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 14 February 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
 If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) <u>3,4</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. Figures 15A, 15B, and 16 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The terms "small," and "large" in claim 1 are relative terms which render the claim indefinite. The terms "small," and "large" are not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Art Unit: 3682

5. Claims 1-3 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chikuma et al. (EP 0 666 210) in view of Takaoka (USPN 5,819,871).

Chikuma et al. discloses an electrically powered assisting apparatus (102), being characterized in that a gear portion (111b) of said worm wheel is made of synthetic resin material, and a core metal portion (111^ab) of said worm wheel is made of metallic material whose specific gravity is small and coefficient of linear expansion is large with respect to an output shaft material, whereby limit torque of said torque limiter is set low under high temperature and high under low temperature;

being characterized in that said worm wheel is formed by joining a thin synthetic resin to an entire outer peripheral surface of a teeth portion of a gear-shaped core metal by way of chemical bond according to composite molding technique of adhesive (see column 4, lines 10-23).

Chikuma et al. do not disclose a torque limiter having a ring member for applying elastic force mounted between a worm wheel and an output shaft;

said output shaft is made of iron material; or
core metal is made of aluminum alloy or copper alloy.

Takaoka discloses an electrically powered assisting steering apparatus provided with a torque limiter having a ring member (51) for applying elastic force mounted between a worm wheel and an output shaft.

To modify the apparatus of Chikuma et al. so as to utilize a torque limiter, as claimed, would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the teachings of Takaoka

as it would increase the wear life of the worm gear arrangement, further reducing the maintenance costs.

To further modify the apparatus of Chikuma et al. so as to form the output shaft of iron, would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art as it is well within the level of skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious choice.

Furthermore, to modify the apparatus of Chikuma et al. to form the core metal of the worm gear of an aluminum alloy or a copper alloy (also see column 5, lines 24-26 in Chikuma) would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious choice.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Johnson (USPN 4,077,274), Joshiita (USPN 5,971,094), Kurokawa et al. (USPN 6,425,455).

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bradley J Van Pelt whose telephone number is (703)305-8176. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:00-4:30, 2nd F 7:00-3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David A Bucci can be reached on (703)308-3668. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)746-9391 for regular communications and (703)305-3597 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-2168.

BJVP *[Signature]*
April 17, 2003

[Signature]
DAVID A. BUCCI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600